

Campus Climate

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Context: “Campus climate” might be less easy to define and evaluate than some other aspects of diversity. And it may, or may not, fall into the “I can’t define it but I recognize it when I see it” category. With our charge to set specific goals for strengthening the campus climate in relation to diversity, our sub-committee has tried to point to some of the ways we can make the campus climate “visible” – to name some of the activities and manifestations in different parts of our campus of a healthy attitude toward diversity that many of us are likely to “feel,” but may not yet be able to name.

We appreciate the richness of the definition of diversity set out in the 2005 *Strategic Plan*: “the variety created in any society by different social locations, different points of view, and different ways of making sense out of the world comprise ‘diversity.’ Diversity includes, but is not limited to: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, (dis)ability, religion, social class, and status as a first generation college student.” Our sub-committee’s work has picked up on a number of these themes, but our conversations are really just the beginning of an important discussion that should take up all these categories, as well as thinking beyond them.

A desire for a healthy campus climate with regard to diversity is a strong thread running through the “Bridge to the Future” *Self-Study* report of Fall 2007. This report notes, for example, “The Office of Campus Diversity has been in existence for over a dozen years and has arranged an impressive array of diversity programming for the campus during that time period, including the nationally recognized ‘Conversations on Race’” events (4:12). Further, “the university also reaches out to the campus and community through the Midwest Black Man’s Think Tank ... campus table talk sessions, town hall meetings, and lectures offered by the Office of Campus Diversity” (4:12). Global awareness is an important part of enriching consciousness of diversity on our campus, and the report details ways programming, curricula, and study-abroad opportunities enrich the campus climate.

The possibilities of campus housing to be a place that fosters an open and affirming attitude toward diversity is another theme in the *Self-Study* report, and plays a role in a number of the goals our committee set forth. Similarly, the *Self-Study* mentions the importance of student clubs “through the office of Student Life [which have] provided space for authorized special interest groups, including the Gay-Straight Alliance, to organize campus events” (7:49). Our goals reflect this interest in including students, staff, and faculty in engaging in diversity-fostering activities in all the campus spaces.

The *EMA Partner Site Visit Evaluation* largely praised the campus climate:

Overall campus climate is safe, accepting, and tolerant of diverse views. The presence of international students provides backgrounds, experiences, and cultural differences that are different and promotes new student learning opportunities.

IUSB vigorously engages the university and local community to dialogue on difficult and complex issues such as discrimination, religious conflict, gender issues, poverty and environmental concerns to foster better understanding and develop practical solutions.

The camaraderie among underrepresented student groups is strong and that bodes well for the campus.

The challenges they listed were the following:

Limited participation by administrators, deans and faculty in student events that are sponsored by under-represented student groups.

Lack of exposure and limited understanding of diversity of entering freshmen.

Insufficient funds to develop, maintain, and support programs.

No Greek fraternities or sororities.

It was mentioned several times throughout the visit that South Bend is a conservative community, which can present a challenge related to diversity efforts.

Goals and Objectives

We wish to emphasize that while our discussions were rich and optimistic, they are preliminary. We began our discussions with the EMA Partner Site Evaluation. The “limited understanding of diversity of entering freshmen” led us to inquire into the ways Freshman Orientation addresses this topic, and indeed it is part of the orientation discussions. This is something a future group might return to, but we were reminded of how much information is thrown at incoming students, and wish to be cautious about seeing Orientation as a time for in-depth discussions of diversity.

While we are not likely to gain Greek fraternities or sororities any time soon, the new campus housing will provide opportunities for community, and could be places where service fraternities will further enrich campus life.

The goals we have begun to flesh out on the chart are as follows:

Goal 1: Increase participation by administrators, deans, faculty and students in campus events that promote diversity. Our objectives address the possible resistance to campus engagement and suggest a range of ways incentives might be offered for increased participation in university life. We feel strongly these must not be seen as mandates; carrots rather than sticks is our suggestion.

Goal 2: Establish a higher budget priority to diversity-promoting programs. Strengthen traditional and non-traditional funding sources for diversity initiatives. We have not yet fully developed this goal, but in such belt-tightening times for our university budget, it is essential to think creatively about grants and other outside funding opportunities to support programming and initiatives.

Goal 3: Support groups on campus devoted to developing support networks for Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered students, faculty, and staff. Given a current campus “Safe Zones” initiative by and for GLBT and allied straight faculty, staff, and students, this goal is already well on its way to being realized.

Goal 4: Ensure housing provides safety, support, and services necessary to foster opportunities for social interaction among diverse populations. This important goal will need attention from the new

housing director, campus police, and possibly the counseling center and other resources on campus. We are optimistic about the possibilities of campus housing to provide enriching space for campus diversity.

Goal 5: Improve the integration of international students into the life of the university community. Increasing numbers of international students, increasing opportunities for our students to study abroad, and our increasingly global General Education requirements and other curricula make this a promising moment to design programming and activities to draw international students into the heart of the university community, and to provide opportunities for students to learn from one another’s experiences and backgrounds.

Finally, our committee feels strongly that if we truly believe diversity is central to how we do business at IU South Bend, we need to give the Office of Diversity more resources and create a *full-time position* for the Director of the Office of Diversity, with an accompanying support staff. This important point is part of the Leadership and Commitment section of this report, but we wish to echo this crucial argument as our closing point, since a full time person in this position is essential to the success of the goals and objectives we have set out in these materials on campus climate.

Goals, Action Strategies, & Objectives	Time Frame	Fiscal Needs	Challenges	Assessment Strategies & Procedures	Performance Indicators & Accountability
Goal 1: Increase participation by administrators, deans, faculty and students in campus events that promote diversity.					
Objective 1.1: Promote incentives for students, faculty and staff to attend such events.					
	Phased in after discussions with faculty and staff.	Perhaps none	Getting faculty and staff on board.	Feedback sheets from events.	NSSE data.
Objective 1.2: Increase campus-wide diversity-themed events that promote awareness of unconscious privileges and an appreciation for diversity.					

Goals, Action Strategies, & Objectives	Time Frame	Fiscal Needs	Challenges	Assessment Strategies & Procedures	Performance Indicators & Accountability
	Phased in after discussions with faculty and staff.	Unclear.	Getting faculty and staff on board.	Feedback sheets from events.	NSSE data.
Objective 1.3: Draw on UCET’s willingness to offer pedagogy workshops with diversity themes.					
	Phased in after discussion with UCET.	Perhaps none	Perhaps none.	UCET’s discretion.	UCET feedback sheets
Goal 2: Establish a higher budget priority to diversity-promoting programs. Strengthen traditional and non-traditional funding sources for diversity initiatives.					
Objective 2.1: See above.					
	Begin discussions immediately about grant-writing and other sources of funding.	Not yet clear; it depends on programming, and willingness to share costs between internal and external university sources.	Everyone’s budget is strapped.	Not yet developed.	NSSE data, perhaps collected at the sophomore year as well as for exiting seniors, may help measure the results of better funding of diversity programming.

Goal 3: Support groups on campus devoted to developing support networks for Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered students, faculty, and staff.

Objective 3.1: Develop “Safe Zones” training and awareness programs on campus to create opportunities for dialogue about the diversity of sexual identities on campus.

	Training for trainers in Spring '08; by Fall '08 have trained, designated trainers for regular GLBT-awareness sessions.	Trainers from Ft. Wayne cost \$400.00. Further costs: travel, stickers and other publicity and training office supplies.	Willingness of staff, faculty, and students to exert leadership. (An ad-hoc committee is already leading this initiative with enormous energy; consider making this a more permanent campus committee.)	Develop a pre and post “Safe Zones” assessment tool.	NSSE and other assessment tools. Gather info from HR, Affirmative Action office, and other sources.
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Objective 3.2: Designate concrete “safe zones” on campus that are labeled clearly, and publicize what this means. (Aim for at least one space in each building, including residential housing.)

	By Fall '08.	Minimal – for publicity stickers and flyers.	Willingness of faculty and staff.	Develop a pre and post “Safe Zones” assessment tool.	NSSE and other assessment tools. Gather info from HR, Affirmative Action Office, and other sources.
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Objective 3.3: Ensure GLBT identity is included in a range of course offerings.					
	Purview of curricular-co-curricular transformation.	Purview of curricular-co-curricular transformation.	Purview of curricular-co-curricular transformation.	Purview of curricular-co-curricular transformation.	Purview of curricular-co-curricular transformation.
Objective 3.4: Support the student group the Gay-Straight alliance					
	Now.	None.	Willingness of staff, faculty, and students to exert leadership.		Is club flourishing? Are other offices on campus (HR, Aff. Action, etc.) involved?
Goal 4: Ensure housing provides safety, support, and services necessary to foster opportunities for social interaction among diverse populations.					
Objective 4.1: Ensure diversity-minded safety, support and services in campus housing.					
	Have programs in place before housing opens. (See Hanover Research report of Oct. 2007 for ideas about accommodating and supporting diverse populations in housing.	To be developed by campus police, housing director, and related campus resources.	Training time and resources.	Purview of campus housing director, campus police, and others.	Not yet developed

Objective 4.2: Create initiatives for diversity-themed social, informational, and educational events housed in student residences.					
	See 5.1, below.	See 5.1, below.	See 5.1, below.	See 5.1, below.	See 5.1, below.
GOAL 5: To improve integration of international students into the life of the university community.					
Objective 5.1: Develop a plan to integrate international students under the auspices of housing programming.					
	Start-up the first semester campus housing opens.	Utilize housing staff. Include training in staff and student RA orientation	To identify both curricular and extracurricular goals.	Standard class evaluations for curricular goals. Instruments to evaluate service-learning goals for extracurricular goals.	Professor of Record to submit final evals of curricular goals.
Objective 5.2: Develop an initiative using the arts (visual, music, theater, spoken word) to depict stories and images.					
	One semester prior to startup of housing	To purchase artistic materials and technical expertise.	Identify a Professor of Record to develop and monitor curricular goals.	Standard class evaluations for curricular goals. Instruments to evaluate service-learning goals for extracurricular	Housing staff and student RAs to facilitate public exhibit of creative works.

				goals.	
Objective 5.3: Identify a theme for the arts initiative that can be translated into images or other artistic works					
	One semester prior to startup of housing	None	Coordination with other campus diversity initiatives to avoid duplication of effort.	Standard class evaluations for curricular goals. Instruments to evaluate service-learning goals for extracurricular goals.	Professor of Record to submit final evals of curricular goals.
Objective 5.4: Identify international students to work with residential students on the creative component.					
	No later than Week #3 of the semester.	None	To organize opportunities for international and resident students to interact and build into these times opportunities for work on the artistic component.	Instruments to evaluate service-learning goals for extracurricular goals.	Housing staff and student RAs to facilitate public exhibit of creative works.

Objective 5.5: Establish links with local art community, both mainstream and counterculture.					
	One semester prior to startup of housing	In-kind exchanges such as exhibits in the Gallery in exchange for commitment to arts initiative in housing.	Coordination and recruitment to ensure deep penetration into the marginalized arts community as well as the mainstream. Identifying international artists, thespians, singers, etc.	Monitor scope and depth of arts roster each semester. Identify areas of weakness and seek artists to bolster the network.	Housing staff and student RAs to facilitate public exhibit of creative works.
Objective 5.6: After a trial period, incorporate arts model into larger campus initiative.					
	Two years after implementation.	Unknown	Coordination with other campus diversity initiatives to avoid duplication of effort.	Adoption by other campus entities.	Professor of Record to monitor curricular goals.